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Reprinted from a doctoral dissertation on the history, theory, and scope of residential adult education in the United States, this essay suggests a number of values to be found in the residential method, together with certain trends, educational attitudes, and other forces that could affect participation in, and the growth and structure of, residential programs. Problems in working out a sound philosophy of residential higher adult education are briefly discussed. In a postscript by A. A. Liveright, questions are raised as to the meaning, essential elements, effectiveness, goals, and staffing of residential adult education centers. (ly)

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NOTES AND ESSAYS ON EDUCATION FOR ADULTS 29

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# WEEK-END LEARNING IN THE U.S.A.

ROBERT H. SCHACHT

CENTER *for the* STUDY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

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# WEEK-END LEARNING IN THE U.S.A.

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## NOTE

Mr. Schacht's piece is one of the concluding chapters of an impressive doctoral dissertation which examines in detail the history and theory of adult residential education and the range of such programs presently offered in the United States. Those readers particularly interested in the theme may wish to read the entire document, which we intend to have available for loan at the Center Clearinghouse with other significant doctoral theses.

We hope, with this publication, to advance the general debate about the merits and problems of residential education, the same intention which led to our earlier publication of Royce Pitkin's essay (Notes and Essays, No. 14). To help sharpen the issues, Dr. Liveright has added a postscript designed to stimulate further discussion, posing in deliberately challenging form some of the most interesting questions yet to be resolved by the adult educator.

January, 1960

Harry L. Miller,
Assistant Director

## WEEK-END LEARNING IN THE U.S.A.

There seems a very good chance that residential adult education is due for an upswing in the United States. Not that residential learning is any foreigner to the American scene—Chautauqua and the Danish Folk School movement in the United States both began in the 1870's; in the 1920's adaptations of the folk-school idea sparked residential programs such as that of the Pocono People's College and that of the Opportunity School of Berea College and the Opportunity School of South Carolina; during the 30's and 40's labor unions began to sponsor week-long residential sessions to develop union leadership and a better understanding of economic and organizational problems; by the 1950's executives, too, were in residence, spending from a few days to a number of weeks studying management or human-relations problems or immersing themselves in cultural disciplines.

Residential programs seem particularly helpful where the development of deep understanding is desirable or where broad aims and multiple goals need to be explored. Any rationale for residential adult education, however, must ultimately depend upon the extent to which residential adult education is consistent with sound principles of learning as well as appropriate to American culture patterns. And perhaps some assumptions should be recognized as underlying not only this paper but the whole philosophy and programming of adult education: adult education—some planned and systematic process of lifelong learning involving modifications within individuals which are characterized by some kind of improvement in skills, habits, understandings, techniques, attitudes, and values—is a desirable and necessary thing; adults can learn, in fact must learn in order to make adjustments to their environment and effect changes in it; the process of learning is both an individual matter and a group experience, and as a corollary, learning takes place in a variety of ways, situations, and conditions—there is room for the individual, group, or community approach, and each of the traditional methods of instruction has an appropriate contribution to make toward the sum total of changes or modifications of behavior desired. I feel, however, that

residential adult education is potentially more consistent than other types of education with the principles of learning as these are currently understood and expressed by competent scholars.

## The Values of Residence

Residential education is certainly not the only educational pattern which takes into account what is known of the teaching-learning process, nor is it the only pattern which can meet the peculiar needs of adults to change and grow. What, then, is the special virtue of residential adult education? What are the peculiar and unique advantages of the residential method which justify its special difficulties and costs?

### The Advantage of Detachment

"The world is too much with us," says Wordsworth, and Arnold Toynbee commends the detachment of the individual as a potent force in the history of any society. "The temporary withdrawal of the creative personality from his social milieu and his subsequent return to the same milieu transfigured in a new capacity with new powers" has always accompanied epoch-making events, he says. The sense of detachment resulting from such a withdrawal is especially essential according to Guy Hunter "for the full success of a course which is seeking to make men stand back a moment from their daily round and from the associations of home and factory and local streets which have so largely conditioned their limited view of the world, and to take a wider and different view." Hunter feels that the physical and psychological detachment inherent in a residential situation is accompanied by a sense of liberation and at least temporarily-suspended responsibility from the demands of office, shop, or home. With this sense of freedom, the inherent resources of human personality are free to emerge.

### The Advantage of a Change in Environment

If a person can detach himself, even temporarily, from his customary environment and live, even briefly, in a new and different place, he is more easily able to change. A break with accustomed ways will often start him questioning the working of society and of his own way of life within it. If the new environment is a friendly and accepting one, he will feel free to experiment with new ideas and to practice new patterns of thought and behavior.

## The Advantage of Concentration

Adult learning is all too often a "some-time thing." A few hours a week in a night-school class cannot help but be a peripheral concern of the working man or homemaker. Learning becomes a primary activity only in a residential situation. Here, when education can be scheduled around the clock, opportunities exist for involvement of the whole person in the learning process. Here, continuity and concentration of program make it possible for each participant to plunge more and more deeply into a subject without the week's gap characteristic of the night-school class—a gap that often means each session must start cold.

## The Advantage of Time

The learning process must allow time for digestion—absorption, assimilation, integration, practice, and application. Seldom does a one-hour lecture or an evening class provide the necessary time for these vital steps. The session is all too often concerned with the presentation of information or the demonstration of a skill or technique. When the dismissal bell rings, the student moves on to another lecture or demonstration, or back to his home environment. The learning process is interrupted, and being incomplete, is ineffective. Even if the session is one of a series or if the following session attempts to build upon the previous one, intervening time disrupts the learning process. Residential education of a long enough period of time can be planned so that the various stages in the learning process can be provided for, both in and out of class situations, and changed behavior is most likely to occur.

## The Advantage of Intimacy

In a residential situation, the constant association at meals, in the living rooms, at the piano, in the game room, along the paths, and on the beach hastens the process of becoming acquainted. These out-of-class activities make communication easier and promote the sort of warm and friendly feeling that encourages expressions of differences. While intimacy is more important for certain types of learning than for others, the attractiveness of a group to the individual and the satisfactions he finds in it have repeatedly been recognized as important to any effective change in thought or behavior. A residential program, too, offers opportunities for close and frequent contacts between students and instructors. Doing things together promotes the kind of effective communication so

important to perception and the development of feeling. Difficulties and problems arising in class can be discussed more freely and fully with staff members a student has come to know as fellow residents. And instructors have opportunities to learn something more of the personalities of individual students, something more of their problems—knowledge which is of extreme value in devising effective learning experiences. "Living together," says Guy Hunter in a paper on residential colleges and some new developments in British adult education," produces a relaxation of barriers which makes adult education ten times easier."

The Advantage of Community

Perhaps the greatest value in a residential experience lies in people living together in a group larger than the ordinary family circle—a group composed of keen-minded individuals with varied tastes and interests and of varied dispositions. Gardner Murphy has even suggested that "People do not know what they want until they have shared it with a group where experience and information take on much meaning." The frequent discussions in small and larger groups, the unfettered criticism of opinion, the ebb and flow of thought on every variety of subject foster a mental alertness as well as a tolerance of the views of others and a comprehension of the many-sidedness of truth which it would be difficult to overestimate. This feeling of community in a group broader than the family can be used as a bridge to a further extension of communal feeling and can foster a feeling of at least tolerance, but perhaps even of respect, understanding, and kinship for an ever-widening circle of humanity.

Residential education, I feel, is not only in harmony with the principles of adult learning, but is potentially more consistent than other types of education with these principles. It is especially adapted to the learning of attitudes, understandings, concepts, and appreciations. Good teaching can be done in non-residential situations. Much learning, especially of skills and of new knowledge, can take place in other ways. Nor do all residential programs result in desirable changes of thought and behavior patterns, but residential situations have a greater impact on attitudes than do other situations; they best afford that opportunity for a re-valuation of social, political, and personal philosophy which is not only at the bottom of citizenship but of all cultural life.

## A Chance for Adult Residential Education in Modern America?

What is the future of residential adult education in this country? Is the development of various kinds of residential programs within our cultural context a sound one, likely to continue and grow? If so, in what directions? What kind of professional leadership is necessary to insure that the growth is psychologically, philosophically, and administratively sound? Perhaps a consideration of some commonly accepted broad generalizations about the nature of the American people and about the times in which we live will offer a point of departure for inquiry.

Americans are not averse to leaving home for pleasure. Each year many people, individually or as members of family groups travel to mountain or seashore, forest or big city, state park or luxury resort for vacation or recreation. Where once these trips were limited to a week or two in summer, vacations are now taken at any time during the year. In addition to vacation travel, people frequently take off to participate in such pleasurable events as state and national gatherings of bowling congresses or barbershop quartets. The pattern is well-established. Americans will leave their homes for several days or several weeks as their employment permits for recreational purposes. Indeed, part of the success of Chautauqua, Aspen, Banff, scores of art and music colonies, many schools of handicrafts, church camps, and labor centers is that they combine a recreational program and a vacation setting.

Americans are not averse to leaving home for task-oriented self-improvement. The purpose of this self-improvement may be largely vocational, professional, or organizational, and the improvement desired may be in order to increase the participant's income, keep him up-to-date professionally, or help him to do a better job as next-year's club president. Such purposes account for the thousands of conferences, institutes, short courses, and workshops which each year bring millions of people into some sort of "togetherness" for a few days' mixture of education and recreation. Many people who attend these gatherings enjoy expense accounts; many more have become accustomed to paying for improvement out of personal funds. While the chief purpose of both those who plan and those who attend is increased vocational, professional, or organizational effectiveness, many find in these gatherings a kind of incentive to continue to grow as individuals and as citizens as well. And task-oriented

programs can be planned to stimulate more such growth. It is apparent, certainly, that the pattern of going somewhere to learn something, even at personal expense, is established, provided the learning is related to recognized vocational, professional, or organizational needs.

American adults have been known to leave home for a general or liberal education. By and large, the American adult is task-oriented. Even the programs of the Junto Weekend Residential School and The Clearing, two institutions which come very close to the traditional ideal of the residential school as being chiefly concerned with the humanities and a liberal education, reflect this characteristic. Programs such as those offered at Pendle Hill, Aspen, the American Assembly, the Midwest Seminar on United States Foreign Policy, and the Residential Seminars on World Affairs combine opportunities for vocational, professional, or organizational advancement with insights and understandings flowing from a wider cultural milieu. Furthermore, it is the task-oriented program that today most easily wins financial support. In spite of this fact, those interested in liberal education may take heart from Whitehead's contention that: "The antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious. There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal and no liberal education which is not technical." If Whitehead is correct, skillful program planners should be able to develop task-oriented, and therefore popular, programs in such ways as to develop those habits of thought and expression commonly thought of as deriving from a liberal education. The success of such programs, however, would seem to depend somewhat upon the attractiveness of the location in which the program is put on, the partial subsidy of the institution or of the participants or of both, and the ability of the participants to see a relationship between the offerings and some recognized needs.

Americans have institutionalized ideas about education. Most people in our country seem to think of education in the words of Joseph K. Hart "as something to be got at school, to be taken on in units and measured in credits, to be passed and to be graduated from. There is little of the Danish concept of education as something to be achieved during all the years of life and to be valued for its own sake." Americans have tended, consequently, to equate education with attendance at degree-granting, accredited institutions. This conception significantly contributed to the failure of the folk schools in American culture. While people dislike exami-

nations and grades, they will endure them for the sake of transferable credits and certificates, if not degrees. The University of Wisconsin Farm Short Course grants certificates; the Opportunity School of South Carolina gives high-school credit; the Lisle Fellowship, Aspen, The Clearing, and Banff transfer academic credit to colleges and universities. The conception of education as courses passed and degrees won also accounts for the high prestige value attached to programs offered by universities and colleges, even where courses are non-credit, and probably accounts for the affinity of labor education to institutions of higher education, the current experiments in management education, and the strong appeal of programs of a residential nature offered by universities and colleges.

More and more responsibilities shift from private agencies to government. Many of the early ventures in residential adult education were initiated by sensitive men of vision and practical men of action who identified needs of people which were not being met by existing private or public agencies. As our public schools, colleges, and universities came to meet the needs of more and more of our boys and girls; as the county agents, public health nurses, recreation departments, public libraries, and other governmental services increased; and as social service agencies, labor unions, and farm organizations expanded, the pioneering and experimental programs of many early residential schools were absorbed by public or quasi-public agencies. While there may always be a leading-edge function for private enterprise in education, and while there will always be people who do not adjust easily to the impersonal and standardized procedures of government, public agencies do seem to grow increasingly flexible and inclusive as time goes on.

More and more regulation and specialized activity are required. While the amateur and voluntary organization are still very much a part of American life, the increasing complexity and specialization everywhere apparent are accompanied by increased regulation by government, the professions, and organized labor. Even a generation ago, a group of unemployed people or volunteers could pool their efforts and erect and maintain housing for such enterprises as folk schools, and could preserve produce, milk cows, and butcher livestock for various types of cooperative living. Today such attempts run into zoning restrictions, electrical and plumbing codes, state and local regulations on the preparation of food for public

consumption, and the jealous prerogatives of organized labor. Maintenance of capital equipment has become a major concern and must be done with help hired in a competitive labor market. Professional, or at least semi-professional, services are required to operate accredited recreational, educational, and even religious programs. The total effect of this trend is to increase the costs of a residential program to a point where they become almost prohibitive to an organization without some type of institutional support or other financial subsidy. This trend presents a serious problem to many of the independent agencies still operating programs and has caused others to discontinue or at least drastically modify their operations.

Private fortunes are less numerous and less experimental. Our tax structure increasingly limits the amount of private fortunes individuals can use to subsidize educational experiments. Those foundations and corporations which have money are more and more inclined to spend it on established agencies for non-controversial programs. Huge grants are still made for research and education, but usually to accredited institutions. Much of the corporation money going into scholarships is routed through pools and administered by testing agencies. This situation does not mean that there are no funds for residential adult education, but rather that there will be fewer and fewer funds for experimental programs by private agencies and individuals if this trend continues.

Americans are likely to have more leisure. The shorter work week, longer vacations, and earlier retirements will inevitably increase the amount of leisure time available to most people. Workers in industries controlled by strong labor unions are likely to have this increased leisure without a decrease in take-home pay. Even if the decline in purchasing power continues, considerable segments of the working population have the protection of cost-of-living adjustments and there are increasing numbers of families in which there is more than one wage-earner. These generalizations may apply more to industry and commerce than to agriculture and the professions, but the trend is evident enough to support the generalization that people will have more time not spent at work.

Americans are likely to travel more. The revolution in transportation is a recognized phenomenon of the last half-century. Improved automobiles, better roads, and a prodigious growth in air travel have more than compensated for the decline of rail transportation. These facilities

for travel both support and promote the almost inconceivable mobility of vast segments of the American people. The "fly now, pay later" promotion of the airlines and the credit cards for gasoline, hotel, and meals removes by postponement the financial barriers to travel. The dispersion of relatives and friends from coast to coast offers excuses. The kodachrome slides and movies of neighbors' trips and the attractive lure of travel agencies provide the final motivation, and Mr. and Mrs. America and family are on the go again.

Americans are likely to attend conferences more often. Commercial interests have tasted the financial possibilities of such gatherings as conferences, workshops, institutes, and camps and have developed skilled staffs to encourage sponsors to locate these enterprises in their hotels or resorts. Universities are constructing huge conference centers which, like hotels, must be operated to capacity to pay off. Religious organizations find themselves caught in the same vicious circle. Special-interest groups such as labor unions, churches, farm organizations and their many counterparts must regularly call the faithful together for intensive doses of enthusiasm, orientation, indoctrination, and know-how. Professional conference counselors stand ready to stage these gatherings with the latest in promotion and production techniques.

Many Americans have had some form of residential experience. As I have talked with friends about "residential education," many of them have been unfamiliar with the term, but once it was defined, have recognized programs in which they were involved as fitting into its pattern and have suggested other programs with which they were familiar and which they felt should be considered in any study of residential education. Even for the University of Wisconsin, for example, during the summer of 1955, twenty-nine separate groups of adults, averaging 169 persons, totaling 3442 persons, spent from three days to four weeks at the University in some sort of residential experience. This record is not unique. It can be duplicated by many institutions and surpassed by some.

An industrial society requires "training" for specialization and "education" for living. Most technically trained specialists in a rapidly changing industrial society recognize the need for continuous efforts to keep up with the new developments in their areas of competency. Attendance at conferences, workshops, and short courses helps them to accomplish this purpose. An increasing number of these gatherings are residential, and

programs of this kind can be expected to increase, providing the standards of instruction are kept high. There seems to be a growing awareness, however, that programs of a vocational or professional nature are not enough to meet the challenge of our times. The rise of science and technology and the huge space they occupy in human thought also demand a deeper concern with human problems in the light of all knowledge. Adult education must deal with both of these tasks in every effective way at its disposal. The very nature of our society demands the continued growth of the individual. The nature of most individuals suggests that much of this growth will be in some type of organized group. There is growing evidence that industry recognizes the need of its executives for humanistic and philosophical studies as well as technical studies and that it is willing to spend money and release time for both types of programs.

More adult residential education will probably be offered by liberal arts colleges. James Crimi's study on adult education in liberal arts colleges showed that 57.7% of the 404 colleges responding to his questionnaire were conducting some kind of adult education program in the fall of 1953. While 80.7% offered credit courses, 54.1% scheduled non-credit courses. A total of 45,000 people were enrolled. These courses were over and above the traditional undergraduate programs. If the colleges expand into adult education during the next fifty years in a manner similar to the way the universities have expanded into adult education in the last fifty, there may well be an educational renaissance equal to the demands of our society. Some of this expansion may be in the direction of residential adult education as facilities and staff are available and currently unused many weeks of the year. Goddard College, Dartmouth, Knox, Vassar, and others are already experimenting with residential programs during times when their facilities are not needed at peak capacity to service their traditional programs.

The proportion of senior citizens to our total population is increasing. There are in the United States today fifteen million people sixty-five years of age or over. This number is increasing at the rate of one thousand each day. These people are increasingly destined to live to become seventy-five, eighty, or more. A combination of governmental, industrial, and private pension plans and retirement systems will give them an increasing amount of financial security. But many of these people do not know what to do with themselves. Adult education in general, and more

specifically some form of residential adult education, has an opportunity and a responsibility to society in general and to these older adults in particular to help them stay alive as long as they live.

Young adults are a "natural" for new patterns of residential education. Young people have always needed some physical and psychological break from home in order to establish themselves as individuals, as well as that group experience with eligible and competitive males and females which is a necessary prerequisite to marriage. Some of this experience comes when the young adult can go away to college. Some of it has been found at such places as C.C.C. camps and N.Y.A. centers. But even more related to the residential idea as it is interpreted here are the experiences which can be provided by the Lisle Fellowship and other work and study programs sponsored—usually—by religious and social agencies. In a rapidly expanding economy, variations of the Lisle program ought to become more and more popular.

## The Shape of Things to Come

If current ventures in residential adult education are to continue and new ones to take hold, however, some criteria must be met. No venture can expect to succeed without competent leadership, fortunate timing, a sound financial structure, and a program geared to the needs of those it is intended to serve. The presence of one or two of these conditions is not enough; the absence of any one jeopardizes the venture. This generalization is as true of ventures sponsored by established institutions such as universities, church bodies, or labor unions as it is of isolated programs begun by individuals.

Inherent in this generalization, however, is the concept of change. Leadership varies with the coming and going of personalities. Other social agencies impinge upon a given program and their dynamic growth may cut the ground out from under a static institution. Fortuitous events which in one season might have carried a program under full sail may give way to war or depression which can shipwreck the same program the next year. And, finally, the needs of one generation are not automatically the needs of the next, and a program irresponsive to changing needs may find that its clientele has transferred its allegiance to a new cause. It is true, too, that the forms residential adult education is likely to take will be quite different from anything conceived by the purists among its

proponents. It is certainly foolish to expect anything like a "residential movement" in the United States, both because of the historical background of previous residential ventures and because those who find themselves developing residential programs today owe their prime allegiance elsewhere. However, inasmuch as it is the finding of educators that some experience in residence helps to integrate knowledge and feeling and affords time and space which individuals may use to make themselves more nearly whole, it is likely that the residential idea will continue to find its way into educational programs. But what directions will it take? The peculiar nature of the American educational tradition with its lack of federal control and pattern of autonomous and pluralistic private and local direction will insure continual innovation and experimentation. Not all of these experiments will mark a direction, to be sure, but there are likely to be enough differences in the emerging patterns of adult education for some of the directions of residential adult education to be forecast:

1. The small, private, informal program will increasingly give way to large, institutional, and more formal operation.
2. The idea of learning for the sake of developing the whole person will increasingly give way to task-oriented programs of self-improvement directly related to immediate vocational,professional, or organizational needs.
3. Certain types of residential adult education will increasingly become related to the vacation patterns and family responsibilities of their clientele.
4. The isolated retreat in mountain or forest will increasingly give way to the large well-equipped modern facility near airline or rail terminal.

Projections 3 and 4 above are somewhat contradictory and require additional explanation. Following the tendency in religious and labor education to plan residential facilities and programs to accommodate the family unit rather than the single individual, and with the Vassar Summer Institute for Family and Community Living and the Chautauqua program as examples of what can be done in the way of combining family vacation and education, it seems likely that a residential center which provided inexpensive living for the whole family and a program which combined education and recreation could be quite well supported. To some extent, of

course, a program like Vassar's or Chautauqua's dilutes values historically inherent in residential education, but perhaps a half a loaf is better than none at all. This type of program tends to supplement and feed into, rather than compete with, the more intensive experiences for adults only. And in this age in which so many factors operate to pull families apart, there may be considerable value in offering residential experiences which bring families together with other families.

On the other hand, although it is true that a beautiful setting is important in the reconditioning of the whole person and that there is charm in rustic simplicity—up to a point—the American people are increasingly being conditioned to expect comfort and convenience. This means, in part, adequate toilet facilities, comfortable beds, elevators, effective heating or air conditioning, maid service, meals prepared and served and dishes washed by others, minimum shopping facilities and personal services, and proximity to airline or rail terminal. These are not absolute essentials; many programs operate successfully today with much more simplicity. And it is possible to meet all of these expectations at a place removed from the city—such as at Arden House or Allerton House—except the requirement of proximity to airline or rail terminal. This requirement is more serious for some groups than for others. Transportation from public conveyance can be provided by special bus or car, and people—at least from the region—most often arrive in their own cars, for which adequate and near-by parking areas must be available.

Several other factors operate in favor of the conveniently located facility as opposed to the remote isolated center. One is the tendency of residential programs to grow increasingly shorter. The evidence seems to indicate that most residential programs for adults will run for one week or less, with a large number running only two or three days. Most people are reluctant to spend more time in traveling to and from a program than at the program itself, and this condition operates for the convenient location of the center.

Another factor is related to the way in which most programs are staffed. The tendency is to use experts from government, education, business, or unions. Some of these people are able and willing to attend for the entire period. Their concern for convenience of location is then similar to that of the participants. But those who come in for only one session are even more concerned about easy accessibility.

Then, again, the services and conveniences expected at a center require staff, and staff has a tendency to become somewhat specialized. This condition requires that the capacity of a residential unit should be large enough to justify the necessary staff. Generally speaking, the mere physical mechanics of a residential program will move residential adult education toward the larger unit.

## A Sound Philosophy for the Future

If, as the evidence indicates, residential adult education is to become increasingly oriented to higher education, depending upon universities and colleges more and more for facilities and staff, the question of the university's role becomes increasingly important. The university, with respect to its programs in residence, should not become a convention center. Hopefully, its facilities must be conceived so that form follows function, but whatever structure or structures it has to work with, its educational program needs to be soundly conceived and wisely administered.

Administrators and staff members of large residential centers could well bear in mind what Edith A. Lyle, tutor at Newbattle Abbey College, suggests as a necessary condition if residential adult education is to be more than "merely a hotel, with lectures and tutorials 'laid on.'"

> ". . . the staffs of such colleges must be conscious of what they are trying to do, and articulate about it. . . . Heads of colleges should give a lead to college opinion in favor of high standards of conduct and scrupulousness in behavior. They should present education in general and the college in particular as not merely an opportunity for each individual to fulfill private ambitions, but as an opportunity to serve purposes transcending them. Every tutor should be encouraged to share responsibility for the quality of the life lived in the college.
>
> "There must be a purposive shaping of the community—its institutions, customs, rules, since the individual can only fully live the good life in a community."

Instructors in residential programs, whether these be short-term or longer can take counsel from what Paul Scheid, in describing the programs of some Scandinavian folk schools, says a good folk school teacher is like:

> "It is considered important that he have not only a thorough knowledge of his subject and of other fields in the liberal arts but also that he possess additional qualities distinctive of the 'master teacher.' He must relate his subject matter to the student as a whole person, in terms of the student's life experi-

ence and of his developing human values and goals. He teaches from the point of view of educating the student for life."

Residential adult education may gain comfort, convenience, respectability, prestige, financial support, expertise, and sound administrative management; it may also grow too large and formal, lose its creativity and experimental nature, cut itself off from those who are not at home in an academic atmosphere, and become subject-matter oriented. Traditionally, because of their close association with one personality and one philosophy of education, the successful and well-known ventures in residential education developed a unique character of their own. They represented a certain feeling and outlook which they made somehow clear and desirable to their students. But what kind of personality or uniqueness can a hotel facility develop? It may house a great variety of programs which draw staff as well as participants from a region, or the entire United States, or even from the four corners of the world. People fly in one day, attend a variety of meetings both large and small, and return home the next day or the next. How residential adult education under these circumstances can maintain the values of detachment, environment-break, concentration, time, intimacy, and community needed for learning and change is the challenge confronting those who administer and staff residential programs. This challenge is being faced with varying degrees of seriousness on those campuses already "in the business" or planning to build facilities or run programs for adult groups. And much of this challenge must be accepted by those in the "conference office"—or whoever they may be who relate the facilities and staff of a university to the needs of people. The role of the conference office, or its equivalent, is as yet largely undefined, both within institutions and professionally among adult educators. It is one of the immediate concerns of the Division of Conferences and Institutes of the National University Extension Association. This organization has just recently established a Committee on Liberal Education to work with The Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults in trying to devise legitimate means of inculcating the liberal approach in task-oriented programs conducted by the member institutions of the NUEA.

The proper role of the conference office is not an easy one to define or to implement. There is, for instance, considerable pressure from the business office to keep residential facilities operating at least at the break-even point, which may mean they must operate up to 90% capacity. There

is also pressure to schedule canned or packaged programs for groups that can produce clientele, must not be offended, and resent any attempts to influence program content or the choice of staff. There is often a reluctance on the part of university departments to admit that their own subject-matter experts could profit by the programming suggestions of the conference office. There are sometimes, too, recognized deficiencies in the competence of the conference office personnel. By and large the people who staff such offices are generalists in adult education, not quite recognized by their professional colleagues and somewhat insecure in their own minds as to both the processes of adult learning and the substance and function of a liberal education. These people are in need of help unless they are to become mere functionaires and housekeepers. Some help may be forthcoming from the anticipated new working relationships between the NUEA and the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults. Certainly the professional development of the conference office is imperative to the future of residential adult education in this country. Nor should this development exclude those who administer residential adult education in non-university centers. Although residential adult education may be increasingly the province of universities, using their facilities and their staffs, it should not be exclusively university oriented. The university conference office has its counterparts in other agencies, where those who administer and staff residential adult programs need much the same kind of help that the university office needs—and people from these other agencies can contribute much understanding and a world of experience out of their respective traditions and milieus.

There are, in brief, trends within our present society which, if unguided by intelligent leadership, may lead to the liquidation of any carryover from the traditional concept of residential adult education. On the other hand, understanding and competent leadership can capitalize upon these trends and guide the development of residential adult education, as an integral part of the total lifelong learning experiences of all of our people, into a significant future equal to the demands of our times.

## Postscript

## SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT RESIDENTIAL ADULT EDUCATION

When persons active in the field of higher adult education get together to discuss evening college credit courses, correspondence study, extension centers or extension classes, conferences and institutes and even arts programs there is usually some common area of agreement about what it is they are talking about. There are of course some differences in their images and some variations in what they do, but, in general, they are able to sit down and communicate about common problems confronting them without starting anew each time to try to define what is the subject of discourse.

This is definitely not the case with respect to either community development or residential adult education.

In the field of community development an active committee in the NUEA is working toward some crystallization of meaning and is carefully assessing the various programs operated in the name of "community development." Several publications about community development are underway and there seems to be some hope that the term will soon be defined and the area more widely and generally understood.

In the field of residential adult education—despite the fact that millions of adults are involved in some sort of residential (that is a several-day educational experience carried on away from the home of the student) educational activity in the United States every year, there is almost no clarification or agreement about what we mean by the word "residential" and little active work underway to determine how the so-called residential experience can be made a truly important and effective educational experience.

It is true that there is a small residential section in the Adult Education Association (made up primarily of the exponents and supporters of the Scandinavian Folk School Movement and representing only a tiny

fraction of those carrying on some kind of residential program in the U. S. today) and that a series of international institutes on residential adult education have been held during the past few years (again representing primarily these same disciples of Bishop Grundvig).

Notes and Essays, No. 14, "The Residential School in Adult Education," by Royce Pitkin clearly represents the thinking of this group of dedicated, devoted, ardent, and important exponents of RESIDENTIALISM. It clarifies their position and sets forth their beliefs, but it does not represent the thinking of the hundreds of conference and institute directors, church workers, business trainers, and agricultural extension agents who are involved in operating an infinitely greater number of residential activities each year. As a matter of fact it is likely that Dr. Pitkin and his co-members of the residential committee would not admit that these others are, in fact, really carrying on residential programs.

Robert Schacht, in this publication, moves beyond the very dedicated and most exciting (but certainly limited) area covered by Pitkin and talks about residential adult education in broader terms. He admits the existence of the many brief week-end programs and short courses run by universities and by independent organizations. His criteria for effective residential education open the door to many persons who would not be admitted to the edifice of residentialism by Royce Pitkin. Nevertheless his criteria: "competent leadership, fortunate timing, a sound financial structure, and a program geared to the needs of those it is intended to serve" apply equally to any adult education activity and in no way establish special criteria for residential adult education enterprises.

Schacht's arguments for the value of a residential experience are compelling and persuasive, but they are very general. They do not relate the advantages of a residential situation to specific educational goals and then suggest how these goals can be better met in a residential rather than a spaced-learning (i.e. series of classes run on a campus or evening college) or correspondence situation. His predictions of trends and future developments are also interesting and should stimulate some discussion. But, again, these predictions, very properly, raise as many questions as they answer.

We sincerely hope that Schacht's publication will stimulate the asking of important questions and an attempt to arrive at some hypotheses about residential adult education—if not the final answers to the questions raised.

Stimulated by Schacht's paper, I am encouraged to raise some questions which I believe must be examined and answered if we are ever to arrive at a sound philosophy and program of residential adult education in the United States.

The questions which concern me—and, I think, many others who are intuitively convinced of the importance of something we call residential adult education—are:

One - What do we really mean by residential adult education?

Can we arrive at some workable definition which falls somewhere between the Scandinavian Folk School concept on the one hand and the two- or three-day stay at a convention in a metropolitan hotel on the other?

Two - What are the essential elements of a residential situation?

Is residential adult education possible only in some sylvan retreat operated by a dedicated exponent of RESIDENTIALISM, where everyone sleeps uncomfortably in the same place and where they all wash dishes and perform KP services, or is it possible to have a sound residential experience in somewhat aseptic and hygienic surroundings where food is good and well-served and where the students can concentrate on study, reading, and discourse rather than on the elemental tasks of life? How long must one be away to qualify for a residential experience? How far away, and how many at a time? Is it possible to have a sound adult residential experience in a metropolitan setting where the group works and lives together? How many subjects can be taught and what kinds? Is a learning situation a truly residential one only when the "whole man" is dealt with, and does this mean that it is so only when we cover some philosophical content?

Granted that these questions may sound facetious, nevertheless we have apparently been unable to ask the kinds of questions in the past which have resulted in a definition general enough to include the enormous number of educational activities which represent residential education (lower case) rather than spaced learning, correspondence study, or individual learning.

Three - What kinds of educational goals can best be achieved through residential adult education?

Is a residential experience the best way of achieving all kinds of adult education? Is it the only way to achieve some kinds of goals? Is it a wasteful and time-consuming way for achieving other educational goals?

Four - Do we know that a residential experience is a better way to achieve certain goals than other kinds of learning situations? And, if so, why?

Beyond the impressionistic and highly subjective satisfaction and euphoria that most of us get from participating in a good residential educational experience, what indications or data do we have which suggest that the objectives of the educational program have been effectively achieved? Recent experience with a number of residential liberal education programs for adults suggests that in every case—and no matter what the quality of the teaching has been—the participants in the program are enormously enthusiastic and committed, whether they learned anything or not. Even if we know—or are convinced—that the residential experience is a good and educational one, do we know that it is more educational than a spaced-learning situation? In other words, have we, as yet, applied any effective and rigorous evaluation devices to measure the relative effectiveness of residential and other learning situations?

Five - Knowing what are the essential elements of a residential situation and the kinds of educational goals which can best be achieved, what kind of facility can we use and where?

In line with answers to other questions posed, is it not possible to run a good residential program in an urban environment provided that the group of students can be kept together? Can hotels, motels, buses, boats, or planes be used to achieve a sound residential educational program? To what extent do the recently-built centers for continuation study really permit a residential learning situation consistent with the criteria and elements that have been identified as important? If they do not, is there any way in which existing continuation centers can meet these criteria more effectively, and if so, what changes are required?

Six - What experience, training, educational background, attitudes, and personality are required for persons in charge of a residential education program?

Can anyone run a sound residential program? Do existing graduate programs in adult education provide the educational background and experience necessary? Does such a task really require persons with spe-

cial personality characteristics? Where is it possible to secure training which will equip persons to operate a residential program effectively?

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And these, I am sure, are but a few of the questions which must be searchingly asked if we are to arrive at some sound and thoughtful program of residential adult education. There are others, but I suggest that the above six questions might well take top priority.

May I also add that these questions are raised by a man who is himself "sold" on residential adult education. Having had considerable experience at residential programs run for union officers, for Farmers-Union members, for race-relations experts, for persons involved in problems of citizenship, and for deans and directors, I am convinced that there are some important elements in the residential situation which improve and heighten the educational experience. I am convinced that educational programs aimed at bringing about changes in attitudes, understanding, and action skills can be more effective in a residential situation than in a spaced-learning situation, and I firmly believe that it is possible to secure commitment to a continuing learning experience more effectively in a residential situation than in others. I also believe that the combination of spaced-learning and residential situations provides an exceedingly positive, but too little-used, technique for conducting sequential continuing adult education programs.

But these beliefs alone are not enough.

We—and I count myself in this number—who believe that residential adult education is an important method for carrying on certain kinds of adult education, and one that is not yet as widely or wisely used in the United States as it should be, must attempt to define the field, set the conditions, study the process, and evaluate the results if we are really to make effective use of this very important educational method.

It is our hope that this Notes and Essays may provide another stimulus for the further thinking and planning which is required.

A. A. Liveright

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